

which was, of course, a good thing-. At the same time, some of his finest sentiments were expunged; which, perhaps, was so fortunate¹. Jefferson hated slavery, and he had inserted in the declaration a round denunciation of George III. for his part in the encouragement of the slave trade. Congress regarded this in bad taste, inasmuch as the colonies, north and south, profited by their participation in that trade. So, through chance the noblest paragraph in the declaration was omitted. In the original draft was an expression of hatred for the English, who by an inhuman act of securing mercenaries of other countries to set against their American brethren "gave the last stab to agony; and manly spirit bids us to renounce forever these unfeeling brethren. We must endeavor to forget our former love for them, and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind enemies in war, in peace friends." This was expunged as being uncalled for. Congress made several interpolations, but did not in this way materially alter the document. It is generally conceded that the few changes made by Congress, both those of addition and omission, improved the Declaration.

The debate continued for three days, with the prospect at times of it being interminable and fruitless. Jefferson became gloomy and anxious. At last, in the afternoon of the fourth of July, a comical circumstance brought the discussion to a end. Near the hall in which Congress sat was a livery stable (the story is Jefferson's), from which on that afternoon a swarm of vicious flies issued, and, entering through the open windows attacked the thinly-covered legs of the members. Resistance was made with handkerchief and fan, but to little effect. The biting became unendurable, and the dignified body, goaded to distraction, hurried on to a swift and ridiculous conclusion of the momentous question. To escape the flies a vote was taken. The Declaration was adopted, four members voting against it and New York withholding its vote. It was signed at once by John Hancock, the President of Congress, and Charles Thompson, Secretary. The remaining signatures that appear upon the engrossed copy which is to be seen in old Independence Hall, Philadelphia, were affixed on August 2nd, 1776. Of these